

EGYPT, INDIA UPGRADE STRATEGIC TIES

Egypt and India agreed to transform their ties into a strategic partnership by signing five pacts, including an extradition treaty, and agreed to jointly combat terrorism. The pacts were signed in New Delhi in the presence of Indian Prime Minister H. E. Manmohan Singh and Egyptian President H. E. Hosni Mubarak who visited New Delhi on 16-19 November 2008. Besides the extradition treaty, the two countries also signed agreements on the use of outer space, trade and technical cooperation, abolition of visa requirements for holders of diplomatic, special and official passports as well as on enhancing cooperation in the fields of health and medicine. The two G-15 countries also decided to establish a strategic dialogue at the level of foreign ministers.

At a joint press conference with his Egyptian counterpart, the Indian Prime Minister stated that that the visit had opened a new chapter in the relations between the two countries. The two Heads of State stressed on the need for proper representation of all regions of the world in restructuring the international financial architecture and called for a broad-based discussion for reshaping the present economic order.

Source: Hindustan Times, 18 November 2008 and Financial Express, 19 November 2008.

ARGENTINA, ALGERIA SIGN NUCLEAR PACT

Argentina and Algeria signed an agreement to cooperate in nuclear energy research during the two-day state visit of Argentina's President H. E. Cristina Fernandez to Algeria on 16-17 November 2008. After meeting with the Algerian President H. E. Abdelaziz Bouteflika, the Argentinean President commented that the two G-15 countries had agreed to "broaden our relations and reinforce our cooperation."

Argentina constructed a nuclear reactor in Algeria in 1984 which is located near the capital, Algiers. News reports say that since 2007, Algeria has intensified its efforts to build a nuclear energy infrastructure.

Source: United Press International, 18 November 2008.

INDIA PLANS \$15 BN INVESTMENT IN NIGERIA

India's economic relations with Nigeria are set to expand with plans to invest over \$15 billion in the Nigerian economy within the next few years through Indian private sector initiatives. This was stated by a senior Indian diplomat of the Indian High Commission to Nigeria on 20 November 2008. The diplomat confirmed that two ventures for the production of fertilizers and two ventures for power generation involving investments of over \$5 billion were to be established in Nigeria, among other initiatives by Indian companies. India had also offered \$200 million under the NEPAD initiative, \$250 million to ECOWAS and another \$100 million loan under a bilateral arrangement that could be accessed for various projects by Nigerian companies.

Source: leadership.nigeriannewsservice.com, 21 November 2008.

ARGENTINA, EGYPT STRENGTHEN ECONOMIC RELATIONS

The President of Argentina, H. E. Cristina Fernandez paid an official visit to Egypt and met with the Egyptian President on 19 November 2008. She was accompanied by an 80-man strong business delegation from important sectors of the Argentinean economy including the poultry, pharmaceutical and abattoir industries. The Argentinean President stated that the main purpose of her visit was to enhance technological cooperation between the two nations. The business roundtables between delegates of the two G-15 countries sought expansion for Argentine products in sectors like food, mechanical industry, cattle and gas. Argentina is one of the main producers of gas in South America, as is Egypt in its region.

Source: Egypt News, 20 November 2008 and Brazil-Arab News Agency, 26 November 2008.

MEXICO CONSOLIDATES TIES WITH SOUTH AMERICA

The President of Mexico, H. E. Felipe Calderon paid official visits to a number of G-15 member countries in South America during November 2008 with the aim of strengthening bilateral and regional political and economic ties. During his state visit to Chile on 21 November 2008, the President declared that both countries had complementary economies which made them ideal for continuing to promote a Free Trade Agreement. He also witnessed the signing of a Cooperation Agreement between the Mexican Business Council of Foreign Trade, Investment and Technology (COMCE) and the Chilean Society for the Promotion of Manufacturing (SOOFA).

The President of Mexico paid an official visit to Peru on 22-23 November 2008 and held discussions with Peruvian President H. E. Alan Garcia. The two G-15 leaders agreed on the need to explore spheres of opportunity in the commercial field to increase trade links between the two countries. The two sides also expressed their political will to continue with the Mexico-Peru Free Trade Agreement Negotiations.

Mr. Calderon then made a two-day official visit to Argentina on 24-25 November 2008, where he met with his Argentinean counterpart, H. E. Cristina Fernandez. During the visit, the Governments of Mexico and Argentina signed the following agreements: a Cooperation Agreement in the Area of Commercial Promotion and Technology Transfer in International Trade; a Framework Agreement on Access to Information and a Commercial Collaboration Agreement between Fundación Export Ar and ProMéxico. The two sides also exchange Instruments of ratification of the Cooperation Treaty on Legal Assistance in Penal Matters.

Source: www.presidencia.gob.mx, 21, 22 & 24 November 2008.

INDONESIA SIGNS KEY AGREEMENTS WITH MEXICO AND BRAZIL

The Indonesian President H. E. Susilo Yudhoyono paid official visits to two G-15 countries in November 2008 to strengthen strategic economic ties. He first visited Mexico on 17 November 2008 and met with the Mexican President H. E. Felipe Calderon. Both Heads of State announced an oil cooperation agreement between their state-run oil companies. The agreement established cooperation in "development, scientific and technological investigation, and exploration and drilling" between Petroleos Mexicanos (Pemex) and Pertamina, Indonesia's oil company.

The Indonesian President also paid a three-day state visit to Brazil on 18-20 November 2008. During this visit, President Yudhoyono and the Brazilian President H. E. Luiz Lula da Silva agreed to increase cooperation and dialogue between the Common Market of South America (MERCOSUR) and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The two G-15 countries also signed a strategic partnership agreement aimed at promoting their political, economic, scientific and technological as well as cultural cooperation. The two sides also inked three Memorandums of Understanding related to cooperation in agriculture, energy and mining as well as poverty reduction.

Source: Jakarta Post, 18 November 2008 and Asia Pulse Data Source, 19 November 2008.

BRAZIL, INDIA KEEN ON STRONGER ECONOMIC LINKS WITH IRAN

Three G-15 member countries – Brazil, India and the Islamic Republic of Iran - have sought to enhance economic links with each other through exchange of visits by their respective Foreign Ministers during November 2008. The Indian Foreign Minister, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee travelled to Tehran on a three day visit during 31 October – 2 November 2008, to chair the India-Iran Joint Commission. After meeting with Iranian President H. E. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, Foreign Minister Mr. Mottaki Manouchehr and Oil Minister Mr. Gholam Hossein Nozari, Mr Mukherjee, while seeking to push bilateral economic ties across sectors such as oil and gas, steel, fertilizer, infrastructure and railways, stated that India was encouraging its public and private companies to invest in Iran.

The Brazilian Foreign Minister Mr. Celso Amorim was also in Iran on 1 November 2008 and held detailed discussions with his Iranian counterpart. While meeting a business delegation, Mr. Amorim stated “expansion of ties with Iran was a priority in Brazilian foreign policy.” In turn, the Iranian President H. E. Mahmoud Ahmadinejad stated that “there are no barriers to expansion of ties with Brazil.” Mr. Amorim also underlined the need to hold a joint economic commission. “Such a commission provides a basis to expand bilateral relations, hold meetings between the two G-15 countries’ Presidents and finalize mutual agreements,” the Brazilian minister commented.

Source: thaindian.com, 2 November 2008 and Tehran Times, 3 November 2008.
